

THE CABLE STEAMER MACKAY-BENNETT.

## SPlicing AN OCEAN CABLE

THE DELICATE JOB RECENTLY PERFORMED OFF CONEY ISLAND.

INTERESTING METHODS PURSUED ABOARD THE MACKAY-BENNETT—A CONTRAST WITH THE OLD-TIME ATTEMPTS.

The maritime world during the last few days has witnessed a business stroke of the highest importance, in the laying of a cable from Coney Island to Sandy Hook by the Postal-Telegraph Cable Company. The motive in doing this is to perfect the marine news service. The company will now have both cable and land wires, and in case of accident to one or the other there will still be a service which can be relied upon.

To accomplish the bringing of a cable to Sandy Hook it was necessary to splice the land end of the cable already laid at Coney Island, and then pay out the new section, which has a length of about five or six miles. This work was undertaken by the Commercial Cable Company's steamship Mackay-Bennett, a vessel fitted out with every mechanical device human ingenuity can produce to meet the exacting requirements of the service in which it is enlisted.

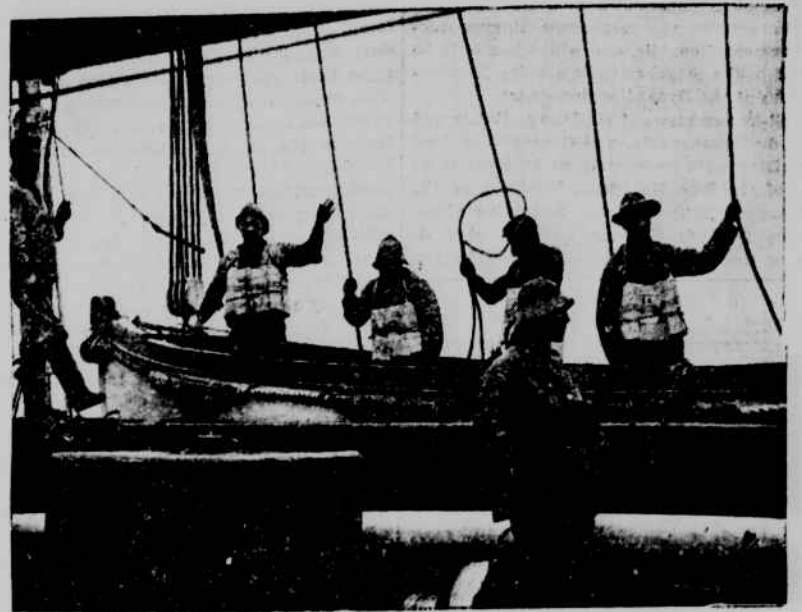
Those who were among the guests of the company invited to witness the notable feat could not help comparing the first primitive attempts made in laying an ocean cable with the perfected up-to-date service going on before their eyes. What had once been experimental, crude and inadequate had now become in the march of progress a smooth, well-oiled, practical system which could meet every obstacle and overcome it satisfactorily, methodically and without the least uncertainty. The Utopian dream of the inventor had become the stern, practical reality of an immense commercial institution.

The day appointed for the work of laying the new section was an unfortunate one so far as the weather was concerned. There was a tempest, with rain and a heavy sea, and the large number of those invited to go on board, while waiting on the dock, had some misgivings as to whether the steamer would put out. But it did, and while some who went were seasick, the majority were kept at the top notch of curiosity by all the wonderful things they saw. The officials of the company present were: A. B. Chandler, president; Edgar C. Bradley, second vice-president; E. G. Cochran, general superintendent of construction, and George W. Blanchard, superintendent of the marine service.

Others present were George G. Ward, vice-president and general manager of the Commercial Cable Company; Charles Cuttriss, chief electrician of the company; Colonel L. C. Weir, president of the Adams Express Company; C. F. Cutler, president of the New-York Telephone Company; M. N. Bethell, general manager of the corporation; Colonel William Ludlow, of the Engineers' Department, U. S. A.; A. W. Lewis, George Edward Harding, S. F. Miller, F. A. Conover, Paul Poquet, of the Compagnie Générale Transatlantique; George T. Manson, Charles H. Wilson, of the Southern Bell Telephone Company; M. Cardagan, Hunter Platt, Frank Cochran, Albert C. Bradley, Robert Gow and Albert Eckert Chandler.

Previous to this trip two sections of the cable had been laid. The first was connected with the cablehouse known as "The Hut" at Coney Island. "The Hut" is a building like a pavilion, in

which the ocean cables come to an end on this side of the Atlantic. A small buoy with a red flag marked the spot where the Coney Island end of the new section was held down by a "mushroom" anchor. On nearing this buoy the steamer was stopped, and the attention of those present was attracted by the lowering of a lifeboat manned by Nova Scotians and Newfoundlanders, who had donned life-preservers in case of emergency, for the waves were rolling dangerously high, and it was feared that the boat might capsize. The little craft reached the buoy safely and performed the feat of making fast a line to a chain fastened to the cable. This had to be drawn on board as well as the buoy. Within fifteen minutes of the time these fearless sailors started out the cable was on board and the work of splicing began. This required the labor of twenty-six men. The outer steel covering of the cable end was first laid back and the copper wire conductors were woven



MANNING THE LIFEBOAT TO GO AFTER THE CABLE.



RECEIVING THE CABLE ON BOARD.

PREPARING TO PAY OUT THE CABLE AFTER SPlicing.  
The cable buoys at the left of the picture.